

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting November 25, 2013

7:00 p.m.
Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Luxenberg, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1&2. Meeting Called To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Dr. Kisiel in accordance with the Board of Education bylaws. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Dr. Kisiel.

A.3. Introduction Of New Board Members

Dr. Kisiel introduced Ms. Mary Jane Pazda and Mr. Carl Stafford, the two new board members. He congratulated them and stated he looks forward to working with them.

A.4a. Election Of Board Chair And Board Secretary

Dr. Kisiel called for nominations for Board Chair.

Ms. Cruz nominated Mary Jane Pazda for Board Chair. She noted Ms. Pazda previously served a full term on the board. Ms. Cruz felt Ms. Pazda's attention to detail, excellent working relationship with administration and staff, and work ethic make her the optimal candidate. She would focus on student achievement and find a solution. Ms. Hagenow seconded the nomination.

Mr. Scappaticci nominated Christopher Pattacini for Board Chair. Mr. Scappaticci stated he has volunteered on Rebuild Together with Mr. Pattacini. He also noted Pattacini is the cofounder of the Foundation for Manchester Public Schools. He is committed to Manchester. Mr. Pattacini is an active listener and explains his point of view; he does not react but instead is thoughtful and responds. Two of his children graduated from MHS and his

youngest is a sophomore there. Mr. Thames seconded the nomination, noting he has worked with Mr. Pattacini since August and found him to be a true leader dedicated to positive change, who puts the needs of the children first.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Leon put his support behind Mr. Pattacini. He noted that Ms. Pazda is great, but having worked closely with Mr. Pattacini in his role as Board Secretary over the last two years, although he has not always agreed with him, he has found that he has been able to talk through issues with him. Mr. Leon further stated he has become a non-affiliated board member at this time.

Ms. Hagenow supported Ms. Pazda. She has known her for years and feels she is thoughtful, professional, compassionate, and has the best interests of the students in mind. Ms. Hagenow further notes Ms. Pazda has been a professional educator her entire life and she understands the school system inner workings, has past experience as a board member, and is bipartisan. Ms. Hagenow further noted she cannot support Mr. Pattacini, feeling that he did not treat her in a professional manner when she was accused of something she did not do this past year. She cannot support his leadership style.

Mr. Crockett noted this is his 9th vote for Board Chair and the first with two candidates. He feels both are quality people. Mr. Crockett noted that as a previous board member, Ms. Pazda is more than capable of assuming the role of chair. However, he finds Mr. Pattacini approachable, even during differences of opinion, and he knows what he is getting in throwing his support behind Mr. Pattacini.

Mr. Stafford noted this is his first meeting on the board, and though he knows both candidates well, he is abstaining from this vote.

A roll call vote was taken:

Crockett – Pattacini
Cruz – Pazda
Hagenow – Pazda
Leon – Pattacini
Pattacini – Pattacini

Pazda – Pazda
Scappaticci – Pattacini
Stafford – abstain
Thames – Pattacini

5/3/1 – Voted in favor of Pattacini for Chair.

As the new chair, Mr. Pattacini took over the meeting. He thanked the Board for their confidence in him and told Ms. Pazda he appreciated her and looks forward to working with her.

Next the Chair called for nominations for Board Secretary.

Mr. Thames nominated Jason Scappaticci for Board Secretary. He noted it has been a pleasure to work with him since August and that on the campaign trail he was able to get to know him better and found him to be thoughtful and not partisan. He notes that Mr. Scappaticci is a product of Manchester Public Schools, having graduated in the class of 199 with Thames own son. In his capacity at MCC, Scappaticci provides a link to the college. He is on the historical society and often quotes dates and other pieces of history. Mr. Thames felt Mr. Scappaticci would make a great Board Secretary with his dedication, diligence, and young energy. Mr. Leon seconded the nomination, stating he is a great candidate.

There were no other nominations for Board Secretary.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Crockett felt he would have a tough time backing Mr. Scappaticci as he only has two years experience. He notes it is nothing personal.

Ms. Hagenow stated Jason is awesome, intelligent, well-spoken, and pays attention to detail.

Ms. Cruz offered her support to Scappaticci wholeheartedly.

**8/1/0 – Voted in favor of Scappaticci for Board Secretary.
Crockett opposed.**

A.4b. Reaffirmation Of Board Of Education Bylaws And Policies

Mr. Scappaticci moved that the Board of Education reaffirm the Board of Education Bylaws and Policies as outlined in Section A.4. of tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Pazda noted that on Page 4 the start time for Board meetings is listed as 7:30 p.m. Mr. Pattacini requested a friendly amendment to change that to 7:00 p.m.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

A.5. Board Of Education Minutes – November 13, 2013

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 13, 2013.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0/1 – Voted in favor. Mr. Stafford abstained.

B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Adult Education Update

Dr. Kisiel noted that for the 2011-2012 school year Manchester established its own Adult and Continuing Education Program, which is run by Dr. Diane Kearney. Dr. Kearney gave a presentation about how the program has grown since leaving Vernon two years ago. She noted the state will visit Manchester December 16-18 from 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. for a program quality review to determine if we will get continued funding. They will evaluate all nine programs. The full power point is available on the website.

Ms. Pazda noted that she was on the Board when Manchester Adult Ed started. She would like to focus on REACT and their forward thinking. She teaches a similar course at MCC and the state legislature is not allowing that to continue and she is glad her students will have a place to go so they are college and career readiness.

Mr. Scappaticci thanked Dr. Kearney for her presentation, noting she had been his teacher at MHS many years ago. His office at MCC coordinates with REACT. His office works on moving the student from REACT to the college. He informed the Board that Dr. Kearney is being very modest in her presentation and that the students are tested pre and post and the vast majority of the students in the program move up at least one level. Mr. Scappaticci inquired about the graduation rate for the high school diploma programs. Dr. Kearney stated that is very difficult to ascertain, as some students take their time going through the program, some stop and come back. As far as the continuing education piece is concerned, Mr. Scappaticci was impressed that the program had grown from 11 courses to 79 over the last few years, especially in that they are competing with MCC.

Ms. Hagenow felt it was a great presentation. She wondered, with so much work done on the computer, does the program provide computers to the students for at-home use. Dr. Kearney stated they do not, but the school computer lab is open until 9:00 p.m. and the last class ends by 7:30 p.m., so the students have ample time if they are in need of a computer.

Mr. Leon thanked Dr. Kearney for all the work she, and her staff, have put in over the last three years to build this program.

Mr. Thames was impressed with Dr. Kearney's numbers and felt the program was commendable. He wondered how the program interfaces with workforce development or One-stop job fund. Dr. Kearney introduced Jim Spafford, a former MHS principal, to discuss the relationship involving Capital Workforce Partners and CTworks. Mr. Spafford talked about a partnership with MCC and Goodwin College, which opens the doors for our students and they can actually receive dual credit with MCC as they complete courses.

Mr. Crockett felt it was a great presentation and wondered if the program was self-sustaining financially. Dr. Kearney stated the continuing education portion is self-supporting and the Adult Education portion receives 50% reimbursement from the state.

Mr. Pattacini noted he had attended the Adult Ed graduation the last two years and it was enlightening to see the wide diversity being served by this program. He is grateful we launched a program that better meets the needs of our community. He also recognized the hard work of the staff, several of whom were in the audience.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented nine items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from Medical Services Consultants to Medical Services Contracted Services account in the amount of \$1,094.
- Transfer from Bennet Academy General Supplies to Bennet Academy Contracted Services account in the amount of \$599.
- Transfer from Manchester High School Library/Media Repair to Manchester High School Computer Technology Computer Supplies/Materials account in the amount of \$1,000.

C.3. Establish the Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Services Grant appropriation for FY 13/14 in the amount of \$93,597

C.4. Establish the USDA Head Start, breakfast and lunch grant appropriation for FY 13/14 in the amount of \$111,052

C.5. Establish an increase in the Manchester Head Start Day Care Program for FY 13/14 for anticipated revenue by \$80,000, bringing the total appropriation to \$610,000

C.6. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$46,950 for FY 13/14 into a special funds account for Head Start Debt Service-Intercept Replacement Grant

C.7. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$92,223 for FY 13/14 for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Basic Grant provided through the State of Connecticut

C.8. Grant MEA President, Tom Nicholas, 0.50 release time for the 2013-2014 school year, and establish an appropriation in the amount of \$26,325 to be funded by the Manchester Education Association (MEA)

C.9. Establish an appropriation for \$47,737 under the FY 13/14 for Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement grant to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to approve the Consent Calendar, as outlined in tonight's agenda.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated Mr. Pattacini and Mr. Scappaticci on their elections this evening as Board Chair and Board Secretary. He was glad that the Board listened to one of his recommendations and presented on Adult Ed this evening with Dr. Kearney. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the books *Amistad* *Rebellion* and *Slave Ships*, both books on slavery. He noted the 50th anniversary of the death of JFK was this month and there were articles in many papers about the topic. Mr. Stringfellow also pointed out the many conflicts and wars we have had over the years and asked that we not forget the many veterans who served.

Mrs. Schootz, 12 Conway Road, stated that she is happy and there are a lot of things to do next year, serious stuff. She hopes to see everyone at Tuesday's Board of Director's meeting and thinks the taxpayers and parents should be able to ask SMARTR questions. She wonders why it took two years to get to a recommendation. Mrs. Schootz claims that 70% of the town's budget goes to the Board of Education and the rest to the town. She feels a lot of this is paid for by seniors. She wants education for the kids. She loved seeing the students present tonight and wish they would come and speak more and come see what happens at these meetings. Mrs. Schootz welcomed back Mrs. Pazda and hopes she will provide good feedback on the achievement gap. She hopes to see Dr. Kisiel next week and wishes everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Chromebooks in the Classroom

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that Manchester Public Schools initiated a change in the delivery of instruction this year, by providing the technology necessary to prepare students for the future. Manchester is one of only a few communities that have provided this technology for their student, which impacts equity by providing equal access to education. Dr. Kisiel credits the leadership of Mr. Geary and his staff for this initiative.

Mr. Geary noted this would not have been possible without Dr. Pease having the foresight to upgrade the wireless network at the school. Board members were provided with loaner Chromebooks to be able to experiment and see for themselves how multiple people can work on the same document in a classroom. He notes the students are learning by doing and experimenting. His presentation is available on the website. Mr. Geary spoke about the efficiency of using the Chromebooks and the engagement of teaching and learning at a higher level.

Media Specialist Jessica Loucks explained shared documents with Google docs, noting that there are 6300 active Google docs used daily at the school.

Media Specialist Kerri Lasoff explained digital citizenship. Ms. Lasoff reviewed that three UCONN interns, in their master's program, are developing a curriculum to be implemented mid-year at MHS at the Freshman level to teach respect, protecting oneself, rights and responsibilities, safety, and health.

Media Specialist Pamela Fontaine explained troubleshooting staff/student partnerships, in which students are engaged to help with maintaining and fixing the Chromebooks. This frees up staff and also teaches the students skills, not to mention they work at a significantly reduced rate over having to send the books out for repair of things such as cracked screens. One such

student, senior Justin, stated he was self-taught by watching UTUBE videos on how to fix broken screens and other problems with the Chromebooks. He has been fixing phones for a while and he enjoys the work and hopes to continue working in this capacity after graduation.

Mr. Thornton, a 9th grade science teacher, reviewed some positives about using the Chromebooks, including being able to see correct answers to tests, have access to current assignments and study materials, Google calendar and reminders, and video chatting. He brought several students with him, all Freshmen, who spoke about some things they like: Tyler - graphing, paperless, environmentally friendly; Veronica – shared docs, working in groups, easy to use; Alania – instant access to answers without interrupting, as a visual learner she finds it appealing; Skyler – researching is easy; Jonathan – was able to video chat when recently in a car accident and unable to make it to class so he missed less class work.

Ms. Lacey is a 10th grade English teacher and reviewed that her classroom now has a website where her kids can help themselves and they have access to Google calendar to see assignments. With another teacher, Ms. Gonsalves, Ms. Lacey created a web quest around banned books.

Mr. Jones, a teacher at MHS since 2005, has done flipped classes, where the higher engaging activities are done at home and the students work on assignments in class.

Josh, a student and class treasurer for the class of 2015, uses his Chromebook in class and for extracurricular activities. Because each student is given a personal email account, you can contact anyone at any time. The class officers created email groups for the entire class so inviting students to activities or fundraisers, like the one this evening at Sweet Frog, is easy and effective.

Mr. Geary went through the list of questions that Board members typed into the Google doc throughout the meeting. He talked about problem solving for those without internet access at home. He reviewed how the students were able to use their Chromebooks during NWEA testing.

Mr. Geary feels we should invest in Chromebooks for Grades 6-8, however not allowing them to take the computers home. Dr. Kisiel informed the Board that this school year we are issuing Chromebooks to all middle school and grade 6 teachers as a first step in introducing the Chromebook to those grades.

Mr. Pattacini enjoyed watching the staff and students embrace the technology. He thought it was amazing to be able to create such

engagement. He noted change is always risky but this is producing amazing, differentiated learning.

E.2. NWEA Update

Dr. Kisiel noted one of the issues and challenges he saw in his first month in Manchester was the uncertainty and misinformation regarding the kinds of tests used to assess students throughout the school year. There were differences of opinion regarding the testing and no consistent evidence that test data was impacting student learning. Through the Alliance Grant the district chose NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association), which enabled us to eliminate other assessments used throughout the year. We were able to purchase the program last year and did a practice set in January. In the Spring baseline assessments were done. NWEA is aligned to the Common Core, which was vital.

Ms. Amy Radikas gave a presentation regarding Manchester's NWEA data for 2013, which is available on the website. Ms. Radikas explained that NWEA tests are computer adaptive, meaning that based on answers to questions, subsequent questions may become more difficult or easier as the child moves through the testing. This is similar to how the Smarter Balanced assessments will work in the future. She noted that the program is norm referenced which compares the data against a large, diverse group and this Rasch Unit – or RIT scale, is redone every three years, the next being 2014. Ms. Radikas pointed out that K-2nd grade have the questions read to them through headphones, while grades 3 and up do not. This could be why we see a dip in 2nd to 3rd grade scores.

Ms. Pazda wondered how this fits with individual child to get differentiated instruction needed. Ms. Radikas stated we are pulling back on assessments with NWEA being done three times a year. Instructional coaches support teachers to make instructional shifts in class. NWEA provides professional development. Currently the trainers are the ones undergoing training, so they can in turn help the teachers.

Mr. Thames wondered, once the data is compiled, how it is shared with the principals. He noted he is not familiar with the coaches. He would like to hear from principals on how they influence instruction in the classroom. Ms. Radikas reviewed that principals are instructional leaders, providing school improvement plans focused on achievement for all students, which has to be based on data. The coach role is a liaison between the teacher and the principal who is not evaluative. Mr. Thames wants to hear from principals on how they plan to impact student achievement. Ms. Radikas shared that she has been discussing with Dr. Kisiel having the principals speak about their schools and resources. Dr. Kisiel added that last year the principals did share

their school improvement plans with the Board. He noted that next month he will begin to bring principals back to board meetings.

Mr. Pattacini was intrigued by how this completely changes the way education operates. We can drill down high level information to specific students and see results. He would like to know what the role of the Board will be as we implement this program. Dr. Kisiel stated the Board's obligation as we approach budget season is to make policy decisions that support technological changes, professional development, resources and human resources and earmark the budget dollars for where they will make the greatest impact.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Cruz reported that the Three Kings celebration would take place at Manchester High School on January 4, 2014. She will be reminding us again.

Mr. Pattacini reported that the Manchester High School music department hosted a fundraiser, prompted by the fire on Main Street. A donation to MACC Charities in the amount of \$2590 was made, which will provide 235 families with food for one week.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

I.1. Personnel & Finance Committee

Mr. Crockett reported that at the last meeting, which was November 20th, Mr. Geary reviewed the clubs that were affected by the \$40,000 reduction in stipends. Twenty clubs and 270 students were impacted. Mrs. Brooks had reported she is in talks with the town police regarding a pilot program involving the buses and deterring motorists illegally passing buses. The committee, in executive session, discussed contract negotiations. In attendance were Mr. Crockett, Mr. Leon, Ms. Hagenow, and Mrs. Brooks, with Mr. Geary as a guest.

The next meeting will be held on December 18th at 5:30 p.m.

J. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Matthew Carter, 109 Lockwood Street, thanked Mr. Geary for his presentation on the Chromebooks and commended the leadership in bring this technology to the schools. He wants to make sure the kids are ready to learn and grown and

compete in this world. As a young parent in a tech world he appreciates the initiative and hopes it grows into the arts, and other facets of the school environment. As a parent though, he wants to shelter his kids from topics such as cyber bullying, etc. He wondered what steps are taken to monitor and safeguard the internet and email, especially once the books are taken home. He is worried that student's maturity level cannot handle this kind of technology.

Though it is not typical for a response to public comment, Mr. Pattacini allowed Mr. Geary to speak in response. Mr. Geary noted they use a two-pronged approach. There are clear rules and guidelines and they do react to inappropriate behavior. There are filters that monitor words and phrases between students. Four teachers monitor the filters. Mr. Geary noted that the recent cyber bullying event that was publicized was not done using school equipment. The second step is to teach good digital citizenship. He notes we cannot ban technology, you can hide from it or embrace it. We are partnering with UCONN this year, working with three student interns who are in a 5th year master's program, who are writing curriculum for a digital citizenship course.

Mrs. Schootz, 12 Conway Road, felt Mr. Geary's presentation was very good and she she loved seeing the kids involved. She hasn't seen student presentations in a long time and she would like to see that more. She is disappointed in 5th-8th graders and wonders if that is why many are leaving to go to charter schools. Mrs. Schootz feels we used to be known for good education and now parents feel left out. Her children went to Manchester schools and her daughter was involved with special ed. She notes that back then the parents were involved and worked together. She feels now the parents feel left out and are not together. Mrs. Schootz wants the education. We need to "do the education" with the children from Kindergarten, first, second, because they are going to be the future. She wants Manchester to be the future of our children, but we have to work together and get parents involved.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, approves the Consent Calendar, especially the ELA acquisition grant and Head Start. Mr. Stringfellow also thought the Chromebook presentation was good by Mr. Geary. He noted that while education on cyberbullying is important, some responsibility lies in the home, making sure internet access is monitored in a central location in the home. He recommended several articles, one regarding the knockout game, special ed in Boston, and articles on both East Hartford and Wallingford schools. Mr. Stringfellow also mentioned community service through the Youth Services Bureau, with a recent article in the Reminder.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Thames is again requesting a presentation on the 209 students that were withdrawn from SAAM this past summer. Dr. Kisiel noted that he heard the original request and they are working on putting together this information in a

written format. He is not sure a full discussion or presentation will be necessary, but the Board can make that decision after reading the information.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary